



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting. The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met on September 20, 2016, in Des Moines at the Capitol. The following was discussed.

Environmental Services. Bill Ehm, Division Administrator, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided an update on activities in the Environmental Services Division:

- The changes to the administrative rules for animal feeding operations will be discussed at the October EPC meeting.
- Several DNR staff members are developing a manual for the management of rivers in Iowa. This includes best management practices with projects such as stream bank stabilization.
- In October, there will be a demand for a hearing on a hog confinement operation in Cerro Gordo County. The Cerro Gordo County Board of Supervisors asked the DNR to deny a construction permit for River Edge Farms, LLC, to build a facility that would house close to 5,000 head of finish hogs near Ventura.
- Supervisors that work in the Environmental Services Division are conducting process reviews related to the issuance of permits to expedite the process.

Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Adam Schnieders, DNR, and Laurie Wissler, Iowa State University, provided a summary on the [FY 2015 Annual Report](#) of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. This included:

- Discussion of money — approximately \$123.0 million was directed toward research and projects for the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. This includes appropriations from the Legislature, grants, and sustainable funding.
- There are 149 wastewater treatment facilities in Iowa, and 86 of them have completed feasibility studies and have been reissued permits. Another 20 facilities have completed the feasibility study phase but have not been reissued permits.
- Iowa State University continues to work with conservation partners to refine data collection methods that will improve accuracy and avoid double counting.

Budget Request. The Commission approved the Department's budget request for FY 2018. This is a status quo budget compared to FY 2017. State General Fund requests include:

- Department Operations — \$12.9 million.
- Floodplain Management — \$2.0 million.
- Forestry Health Management — \$500,000.

Drinking Water Report. The [Iowa Public Drinking Water Program 2015 Annual Compliance Report](#) was presented to the Commission. Highlights included:

- There are 1,878 regulated public water systems in Iowa that serve more than 2.9 million people. This includes 1,098 community water systems, 141 nontransient water systems (schools, churches, daycare, etc.), and 639 transient water systems (parks, restaurants, bars, etc.).
- There were no reported waterborne illnesses or deaths from Iowa public water supply systems in 2015.

Water Use Permit. The Commission approved the annual fee of \$66 for the annual water use permit. The fee for FY 2015 and FY 2016 was \$99. The reduction in the fee is due to a decrease in information technology expenditures. In FY 2015, the amount expended was \$152,000, and for FY 2016, the amount was \$16,000.

Contracts Approved. The following contracts were approved:

- A \$32,000 contract with I & S Group, Inc., to update the Iowa Storm Water Management Manual. The contract will be funded with storm water permit fees.

- A \$311,000 contract with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in Iowa. Funding is from the Environment First Fund. The contract will add a stream gauge and provide real-time water quality support.
- An \$88,000 contract with the State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa for groundwater monitoring.
- An \$82,000 contract with the federal Department of Agriculture Animal Research Service Laboratory to provide ambient groundwater analytical support.

Administrative Rules. The following rule packages were approved:

- A notice of intended action for Chapter 61 – Water Quality Standards. This adds new methods for testing for copper as identified by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.
- Final rules that reorganize the following chapters: Chapter 100 – Scope of Title – Definitions – Form – Rules of Practice, Chapter 101 – Solid Waste Comprehensive Planning Requirements, and Chapter 111 – Annual Reports of Environmental Management Systems.
- Final rules on Floodplain Management Practices. The changes will reduce the need for contractors to seek waivers and variances. Also, the rule change will provide exemptions for floodplain development permit requirements for certain activities, such as excavation for conservation practices or for installation of signs and utility poles. The changes were developed with a stakeholder group that included electric utilities and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be held on October 18, 2016, in Windsor Heights.

STAFF CONTACT: Deb Kozel (515-281-6767) deb.kozel@legis.iowa.gov